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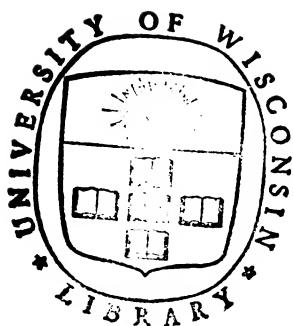
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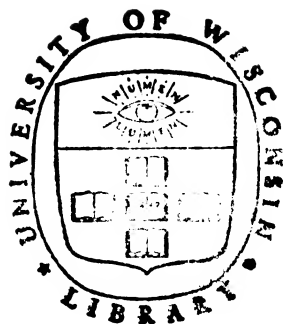
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FIRST SHOE SHOP IN NEW ENGLAND — AT DANVERS.

# A Short History

*... of ...*

## American Shoemaking



BY  
FRED A. GANNON

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## A Short History of American Shoemaking.

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## **Beginnings of Amercian Shoemaking**

Boots and shoes tell much of the story of people. Savages of warm climes go barefooted. The soles of their feet become as hard as leather. Nomads wear sandals of bark of trees, woven grass or rawhide. Egyptians had sandals of papyrus and leather. Greeks had war shoes of iron and brass. Romans, in days of gorgeous luxury, decked their boots with fine skins, gold and jewels. Prehistoric people of Briton wore boots with fine skins, gold and jewelry. Prehistoric people of Britain wore boots of rawhide. Knights of battles of the Middle Ages encased their feet and legs in metal. Dandies of luxurious courts of England and France wore elaborate footwear. Dandies of the English court even turned up the toes of their shoes so much that they fastened by gold chains to the knees and dandies of the French court wore heels so high that they walked as if on stilts. Puritans in England wore stout shoes with square toes, and they were sometimes called "Square Toes."

Early settlers of this country brought over supplies of strong, serviceable footwear of good bark tanned leather. Each man of John Endicott's company, which settled in Salem in 1628 and was one of the best equipped of the colonial companies, had four pairs of boots. The new country was rough and even the stoutest shoes quickly wore out on the rocks of its paths and the stone and stubble of its fields. New supplies were had from England

on the occasional new arriving ships. Naturally colonists in need of footwear adopted moccasins of the Indians, made of buckskin leather. These proved serviceable, especially to hunters and travellers on foot. But the total supply of footwear in the new and growing country soon proved insufficient to the needs of the people and they demanded that shoemakers come from Europe and make shoes for them.

The first shoemakers to come appear to have been Thomas Beard, a shoemaker of St. Martin's, London, and Isaac Rickman, who was sent over by the New England Company to the settlement at Salem, May 28, 1629. In a letter from the company's headquarters in London to Gov. John Endicott at the Salem settlement, the following instructions concerning them were written:

"Thomas Beard, a shoemaker, and Isaac Rickman, being both recommended to us by Mr. Symon Whetcombe, to receive their diet and houseroom at the charge of the company, we have agreed they shall be with you, the Governor, or placed elsewhere, as you shall think good, and receive from you or by your appointment, their diet and lodging, for which they are to pay, each of them at the rate of 10 pounds a year. And we desire to receive a certificate under the hand of whomsoever they shall be so dieted and lodged with, how long time they have remained with them, in case they shall otherwise dispose of themselves before the year be expired, or at least-wise the end of each year, to the end we may here receive payment according to said agreement. The said Thomas Beard has in the ship, Mayflower, divers hides, both for sole and

upper leather, which he intends to make into boots and shoes in the new country. We pray you let Mr. Pierce, the master of the said ship, view the said leather and estimate what tonnage the same may import, that so the said Beard may either pay unto you there, after the rate of four pounds a ton, for freight of the same, the like for his diet, if there be occasion to use any of his commodities or otherwise, upon your advice, we may receive it of Mr. Whetcombe, who hath promised to see the same discharged.

"We desire also the same Thomas Beard may have some fifty acres of land allotted to him as one that transports himself at his own charge. But as well for him as all others that shall have land allotted to them in that kind and are no adventurers in common sort, which is to support of fortifications, as also for the mystery and divers other affairs we hold it fit that these kind of men, as also such as shall, come to inherit lands by their service should, by way of acknowledgment to such from whom they receive their lands, become liable to the performance of some service certain days in the year, and by that service they and their posterity after them to hold and inherit these lands, which will be a good means to enjoy their lands from being held in captive and to support the plantations in general and particular."

Beard, the first American shoemaker, prospered in the colonies. He settled in Salem and plied his trade there for 14 years or more. He was made a freeman May 10, 1643. Soon afterwards he moved to Portsmouth, where he purchased an estate and made his home. Rickman probably



returned to England after a short experience in this country. Of him the colonial records say nothing.

Other shoemakers followed Beard to the colonies. Philip Kertland, who began the shoe manufacturing industry in the now foremost shoe manufacturing city of the country, Lynn, settled in Lynn in 1635. He was granted 10 acres of land by the settlement of Lynn in 1638.

Henry Elwell, another colonial shoemaker, came to this country on the ship *Hercules* in 1634. He settled in Scituate, Massachusetts. He was admitted to the church in 1636. He enlisted in the colonial army for the Pequot War. His house was burned by the Indians.

The little town of Reading granted its first shoemaker "rights and wood and herbage," meaning that he could gather free of charge from the town lands such wood as he wished for fuel and such herbs as he wished for medicines. The town of Ipswich admitted within its limits a shoemaker in 1654 and another in 1663. Other towns also admitted shoemakers. The people were in need of footwear and shoemakers were welcome men among them. Yet, no matter how much desired a mechanic might be in a colonial town he had to receive permission from the town to establish his home or shop within its limits. The colonists wished to keep out undesirable persons.

It is difficult for shoemakers of today to understand the circumstances under which the first shoemakers established their industry in this country. The colonies were thinly scattered along the Atlantic coast. The great ocean lay between them and their base of supplies in the home country. It was a far distance to send to England for

leather, shoes, tools or other commodities. On the other-side of the colonies was the great unknown wilderness, inhabited by Indians and wild beasts.

First settlements were adventures in industry, trade and government. They depended for their existence upon trade with the Indians, with whom they bartered for skins, and upon their fishing and lumbering industries, whose products they sent to Europe. Several colonies, particularly Massachusetts, made unusual experiments in government, and endeavored to regulate occupations and wages and fashions by law, as well as various matters of politics and religion. The position of shoemaker in colonial times was quite curious.

Many early settlers necessarily became jacks of all trades. They hunted deer, bear, and other creatures in the woods, ate their flesh for food, and made their pelts into leather for shoes, stockings, caps, coats and other articles. Farmers raised cattle, sheep and goats, and ate their flesh for food, and tanned their pelts into leather in pits in their own yards, using bark from nearby trees. Commonly, early settlers made and mended shoes for themselves and their families.

A few travelling shoemakers tramped from house to house, carrying a kit of tools and a supply of leather, and they made and mended shoes, and also related the latest news and gossip of the towns, in the homes in which they stopped. In the towns, a few shoemakers established stores, in which they sold shoes made by themselves, or imported. James Everell, who came to Boston in 1634, was a leather dresser and shoemaker, also a landlord and

a selectman. The inventory of his estate showed that he carried a good sized stock of shoes.

The shoe industry in colonial times evidently prospered, for Johnson says of it in 1654 in his *Wonder Working Providence*:

"All other trades have fallen into their ranks and places to their great advantage, especially coopers and shoemakers who had either of them the corporation granted, enriching themselves very much. As for the tanners and shoemakers, it being naturalized into their occupations to have a higher reach in managing these manufactures than any other men in New England are, having not changed their nature in this, between them both they have kept men to their stand hitherto, almost doubling the price of their commodity according to the rate they were sold for in England and yet the plenty of leather is beyond what they had there, counting the number of people, but the transportation of boots and shoes into foreign parts has vented all, however."

## Shoemaking in Colonial Times

Soon after the colonies were settled and manufacturing industries were established in their towns, the authorities began to enact laws for the purpose of regulating industry. The Puritans tried to make the laws of Moses the laws of the land.

In 1630 the General Court of Massachusetts Bay colony endeavored to regulate wages by enacting the following law:

"It is ordered that no master carpenter, mason, joiner or bricklayer shall take above 16 pence a day for their work, if they have meat and drink, and the second sort not above 12 pence a day, under pain of 10 shillings fine, both to giver and receiver."

This early attempt to establish a maximum wage did not continue in force long, for the Court soon authorized the fixing of "wages as men shall reasonably agree." Later a like maximum wage law provided that workmen who accepted more than the maximum wage should be liable to a fine, but it exempted from punishment employers who paid more than the maximum wage. This act was according to the spirit of the times, when it was a common belief that the position and the rights of the employer were superior to those of the employee.

The Massachusetts General Court enacted other laws to regulate wages. It permitted constables to discriminate between skilled and unskilled laborers, and to apprehend

and punish idlers. It furthermore authorized constables to summon mechanics from their benches in harvest time and make them work in the fields harvesting the crops.

In 1651, the Massachusetts General Court authorized shoemakers of Boston to form an organization. It granted to this organization broad powers for the control of the shoe industry, but it forbade schemes to increase prices, and it reserved to the courts the right to settle disputes over wages or conditions of employment. The act authorizing the formation of an organization of shoemakers of Boston was probably copied from an old English law. There is in it a great deal to interest the modern workman, and student of industrial conditions.

The act that permitted the shoemakers of Boston to organize was as follows:

“Upon petition of the shoemakers of Boston, and in consideration of the complaints which have been made of the damage which the country sustained, but by occasion of bad ware made by some of that trade, for redress hereof, it is ordered, and the court does hereby grant liberty and power unto Richard Webb, James Everill, Robert Turner, Edmund Jackson and the rest of the shoemakers inhabiting and housekeeping in Boston, or the greatest number of them, upon due notice given to the rest, to assemble and meet together in Boston at such time and times as they shall appoint, who being so assembled, they or the greatest number of them, shall have power to choose a master, and two wardens, with four or six associates, a clerk, a sealer, a searcher, and a beadle, with such other

officers and ministers as aforesaid every year or oftener, in case of death or departure out of this jurisdiction or removal or default, and which officers and ministers shall each of them take an oath suitable to their place before the Governor or some magistrate, being so assembled as before, or at any other meeting or assembly to be appointed from time to time by the masters and wardens or master or wardens with two of their associates, shall have power to make orders for the well-governing of their company, or the managing of their trade and all the affairs thereunto belonging, and to change and reform the same as occasion shall require, and to assess reasonable penalties for breach of the same.

“Provided that none of their said orders, nor any alteration therein, shall be of force before they shall be passed and allowed by the court of that county, or by the court of assistants.

“And for the better executing such orders, the said master and wardens, and any of them with four or six associates, or any three of them, shall have power to hear and determine all offences against any of the said orders, and may inflict the penalties prescribed as aforesaid, and assess fines to the value of 40 shillings or under, for one offence and the clerk shall give warrant in writing to the beadle to levy the same, who shall have powers thereupon to levy the same by distress, as is used in other cases; and all the said fines and forfeitures shall be employed for the benefit of the said company of shoemakers in general, and to no other uses.

“And upon complaint of the said masters and wardens

or the attorney or advocate in the county court, if any person or persons who shall use the art or trade of a shoemaker, or any part thereof, not being approved of by the officers of the said shoemakers to be a sufficient workman, the said court shall have power to send for such persons and suppress them; provided, also, that the priority of their grant shall not give them precedence of other companies, that may be granted, but that point to be determined by this court where there shall be occasion thereof.

“Provided, also, that no unlawful combination may be made at any time by the said company of shoemakers for enhancing the price of shoes, boots or wages whereby either owner or people may suffer.

“Provided, also, that in case of difficulty the said officers and associates do not proceed to determine the causes, but by advice of the judges of that county.

“Provided, that no shoemaker shall refuse to make shoes for any inhabitant, at reasonable rates, of their own leather for use of themselves and families if they be required thereunto.

“Provided, lastly, that if any person shall find himself grieved by such excessive fine or other illegal proceeding of the said officers, he may complain thereof at the next court of that county, which may hear and determine the cause. This commission to continue and to be of force for three years, and no longer, unless the court shall see cause to continue the same.”

Later, the General Court provided that a butcher should not tan leather and that a tanner should not make shoes and that a shoemaker should not make leather. If

such laws were in force today, the packer tanners, and the shoemaker tanners, would both be compelled to split up their businesses.

The court also provided that tanners who made poor leather should be fined, and forbad the use of "insufficiently tanned leather" in boots and shoes. These were early pure shoe and leather laws. The court also enacted laws forbidding "persons of mean estate" to wear great boots, or other expensive kinds of footwear. These laws, like the old sumptuary laws of Europe, were intended to prevent extravagance in apparel.

Though the shoe industry was strongly law bound in colonial times, yet it flourished.



## Ways of Early Yankee Shoemakers

Shoemaking was a picturesque industry in early days in New England. Whittier describes it in the poem which runs:—

“When Keezar sat on the hillside,  
Upon his cobbler’s form,  
With a pan of coal on either hand,  
To keep his waxed ends warm.

And there in the golden summer weather,  
He stitched and hammered and sung,  
In the brook he moistened his leather,  
In the pewter mug his tongue.”

It was common for early Yankees to combine the occupations of farming and shoemaking, and of fishing and shoemaking. Farmers cultivated the soil in pleasant weather, and in stormy weather, and during the long winter, they made shoes in little workshops on their farms. Men of Marblehead, Beverly, Newburyport, the Hamptons, and other places along the shore went fishing in summer, and made shoes in winter. Young men of the New England shoe trade of a century ago, like genuine Yankee youths, made voyages to sea, considering such an adventure necessary to their education.

First New England shoemakers probably worked in

THE TAPLEY SHOE SHOP. (Now preserved by the Essex Institute.)



the chimney corner of kitchens in the winter or out of doors, under the trees in the summer like Cobbler Keezar. As the shoe business increased, and as shoemakers multiplied, little shoeshops were built beside homes of shoemakers. They were often called "10-footers," because they measured about 10 feet square. Some shops were larger. An excellent specimen of the shoemaker's shop of a century ago is preserved at the Essex Institute in Salem. It is the Tapley, or Lye, shop, which was in use in Lynn at the time of the second war with Great Britain. This shop is fitted with benches and tools of old fashioned shoemakers in so thorough a manner that, were Cobbler Keezar to rub his magic lapstone and appear within the shop, he could sit down on a bench, pick up familiar tools, and make a pair of shoes.

Another excellent specimen of an early American shoe-shop is on the Putnam estate in Danvers, which happens also to be the scene of the birth and boyhood of General Putnam, famous in the Revolution as "Old Put." This shop is a barn beside the dwelling house. Some tools of the early shoemakers, and a few books, are preserved in the shop. Mention was made of this shop in the United States Census reports for 1786.

Still another old shoe shop, of a slightly different type, in the town of Danvers was used by Zerrubabel Porter, soon after the Revolution, as a tannery and as a shoe shop, some say that it was the first shop in New England in which shoes were made for the wholesale trade.

The furnishings of the old time shops varied according to the circumstances of the shoemakers. In little shops,

shoemakers toiled alone. In the large shops, several shoemakers worked together. Each man rented a space for his bench. He required in addition to bench space, room to "swing out" when he drew his waxed ends taut, so he would not strike his neighbor. There were commonly in the shops one or more extra chairs or boxes for the accommodation of visitors, for the old-fashioned shoemaker's shop was as popular a loafing place as was the general store.

Fireplaces were used for heating the first shops. Later, salamander stoves came into use. Some shoemakers put on "shin boards" so that they could sit close to the fire, without scorching their knees. The windows and the doors of the old time shops were loose, and the walls were not plastered, and the cold and wind came through and chilled the back of the shoemaker, even though his face felt as if it were broiling. On very cold days, the shoemakers often closed the shop, thinking it would be more profitable to go hunting than to try to warm the shop. It is a pleasantry, vouched for by Johnson in his "Sketches of Lynn," that, there being no thermometers in old-time shops, the shoemakers determined whether or not it was too cold to work by wetting a lapstone, and seating an unlucky apprentice on it. If the boy's trousers froze on the stone, the weather was considered too cold to work.

The lighting of the shop was as primitive as the heating apparatus. One window with 7x9 panes of glass, allowed sunlight to stream through and fall upon the shoemaker's bench. On dull days, and in the evening, candles were used. Shoemakers made ingenious rigging

**OLD FASHIONED SHOEMAKERS AT WORK.**

(From a Holliston, Mass. bank bill of 1840, in collection of Mr. Howard P. Harris.)



of wood, leather and tin, for holding the candle where it would throw its best rays upon their work. Shoemakers' candles, like tailors' candles, were made by pressing two candles into one candle with two wicks. It gave a two-candle power light.

The attic of the old-time shop, like the attic of the old-fashioned home, was a receptacle for all sorts of discarded articles, such as old or broken tools, worn boots, old lasts, broken candle rigging, battered umbrellas, almanacs and other trumpery. The old-fashioned shoemaker had a notion that everything came into use again once in seven years, so he saved everything he could.

It was common to have a Bible in all the old-time shops. Some shops also had a dictionary, and a weekly newspaper. A few shoemakers like Roger Sherman, signer of the Declaration of Independence, studied from open books, placed beside their bench, as they made shoes. Most all shoemakers liked to talk with fellow workers or with visitors. Henry Wilson, "The Natick Cobbler," who became Vice-President of the United States, mastered the rudiments of debating by discussing problems of the day with fellow shoemakers in Natick shops. He was so impressed with the wisdom of shoemakers that when a member of the Senate, he occasionally visited Natick, and talked over national issues with shoemakers, and he used in speeches in the Senate some of the arguments that were made by shoemakers in Natick shops.

The minister's recent sermon and the latest news from Washington were topics of common debate among shoemakers when at work in the shop. Sometimes, one shoe-



maker would pause in his work to read aloud from a newspaper or a book.

When the shoemakers in one shop were all of the same religious faith and political beliefs the discussions among them were likely to be friendly. But when they differed in their views, arguments sometimes became heated and the participants excited. Serious clashes were averted by sober shoemakers, one of whom would start a favorite hymn, and the others would take it up and swell the volume of music until the angry words were drowned out, and even the disputants began to sing. There were good musicians among the shoemakers of olden times. The fame of "The Musical Shoemakers" of Salem still lingers among some of the older inhabitants of that city. These shoemakers entertained themselves and visitors, with music, while they worked. One day a circus came to town, and the manager, who heard of "The Musical Shoemakers," contracted with them and they closed their shop for the summer and went with the circus.

A sweeter story is that which was told by David Lefavour, a former shoe manufacturer of Marblehead. He was one of fourteen children, all of whom, and their mother as well, found time to help their father make shoes. Sundays after the week's work had been finished, and church services attended, the entire family gathered in the little parlor and sang, while the father played the big bass viol.

But shoemaking in olden days was not, by any means, one sweet song. Shoemakers, like other unlucky mortals, had their vices. Chewing and smoking tobacco was

common among the cordwainers. There was also a sand box beside the stove, into which the shoemakers expectorated. Often, the air of the little shops became vile with stale tobacco fumes. Water in the shop tub, which was used for soaking sole leather, was allowed to stand for weeks, and it became as foul as could be. The rank air of the work rooms combined with the cramped position of the lungs of shoemakers as they bent over their lasts, weakened their lungs, and spread tuberculosis, or consumption as it was called, among them. The factory laws which now are commonly enforced for prevention of spread of disease, were then unknown. The death rate from consumption among shoemakers was high. A common means for fighting it was to send shoemakers out of doors to work. The old-fashioned practice of combining the occupation of shoemaking with farming, or with fishing, saved many a shoemaker from the pestilence bred by the foul air of the shops.

John B. Sias, who died recently in Salem, recalled that when a youth, he worked at shoemaking, and that his lungs became so weak that doctors told him that he would have to live out of doors. So he set out on foot, tramping through Maine and New Hampshire, and making shoes to earn his board and lodging on his way. His out of door life restored his health and he lived to be nearly 90. A wealthy shoeman of the present time had a similar experience in his youthful days.

Shoemakers commonly drank liquors in olden days. In Europe, shoemakers of former centuries made St. Crispin's day, a saint's day of the Catholic church, a day for

drunkenness, regardless of the fact that their predecessors, the stout guilds of shoemakers of old, had observed it as a holy day. In New England shoe shops, grog was served as commonly as on old New England ships. It is related that, during the War of 1812 an apprentice in the Tapley shop in Lynn (the shop which now stands in the Essex Institute in Salem), was sent to the nearby grocery store for some rum. The lad decided on the spur of the moment that he would like to see the world. So he hid the rum bottle, walked to Salem and enlisted on a privateer. After a three months' cruise he returned to Salem, walked back to Lynn, found the bottle, got the rum, and went to the shop, and served grog to the shoemakers.

It was another apprentice who broke up the practice of serving grog in Lynn shops. This youth refused to go for rum, as a journeyman shoemaker commanded. The shoemaker picked up a stirrup (a shoemaker's strap) with the intention of whipping the apprentice. Before he could strike a blow the youth grappled with him, threw him on his back, and with his fist in his face, made him promise that he would send no more boys for grog. This bold and vigorous youth was a Quaker, Perry Newhall. He became a successful manufacturer, and a noted temperance leader, and also, an abolitionist.

## Ways of Yankee Shoemakers

(*Continued*)

Diligence and thrift were honored virtues among the old-time shoe workers. When work was to be had, they worked early and late, and when no employment was offered by manufacturers, they found work in some way or other, going on farms, or shipping on vessels, or tramping to other shoe centres where business was brisk. Moses Putnam, a Danvers young man, was told by his employer that there was no work for him. Putnam asked for the loan of some leather and supplies. He secured them, took them home, and made them into shoes. Then he borrowed his father's horse, and with the shoes in a saddle bag, he rode to Boston, where he sold the shoes at a profit. He repeated this task until he was able to establish a factory. He spent 57 years in the shoe trade. He built up such a large shoe manufacturing business that Putnamville, in Danvers, was named for him.

A Marblehead grocer used to cut shoes on top of a pork barrel, when store trade was dull. He got shoemakers to make shoes for him, and he paid them with molasses, salt fish or other groceries. This thrifty expedient enabled him to start a shoe manufacturing business that earned him a comfortable fortune. David Lefavour, another Marbleheader, who made money in shoe manufacturing, used to work all day Friday and through Friday night, making shoes, and Saturday, without stop-

ping for sleep he would walk to Boston with his shoes in a bag over his shoulder. He sold the shoes, and with a fresh supply of leather he walked back home at night. He lived for more than 80 years and, apparently, his long hours of labor did not harm him.

Henry Wilson, "The Natick Cobbler," worked at a very fast pace. He made twice as many shoes in a day as an ordinary workman. He sometimes worked all day, all night and all the next day. He once endeavored to make fifty pairs of shoes, commonly a week's work without stopping to sleep. But the task was too great. He fell asleep as he was working on his 47th pair.

In 1856, Francis D. Rhodes, of Lynn, made by hand, 792 pairs of ladies' shoes in 50 days. He was paid 22 cents a pair for his work and his total earnings were \$174.24. He averaged nearly 16 pairs of shoes, and nearly \$3.50 a day in wages. These were extraordinary figures for his time.

Commonly the old fashioned shoemakers made the best shoes they possibly could, as well as many shoes. They took pride in their work. They also were actuated by selfish reasons. The shoe manufacturers gave preference in employment to the best shoemakers. The poor workmen were laid off first, when dull times came. Besides, a shoemaker of superior skill, especially one whose work had taken a prize at the Mechanic's fair, was looked upon as a superior person.

Wages were small among shoemakers of former times, and ingenious and thrifty ways were practiced to make the wage feed and clothe the family. Most every thrifty shoe-

maker had a garden and kept a pig. The shoemaker occasionally went fishing or berry picking, and he and his family lived well for a few days on the product of his industry. When dull times came in panic years, shoemakers good naturedly remarked that they would "draw on the clam bank", meaning that they would dig clams for dinner. Against the winter, a barrel of pork and some hams were placed in the cellar, and a bin was filled with potatoes dug from the garden. When the spring came pork and "greens", or dandelions dug from nearby fields, was a common dinner on the shoemaker's table. The preparation of the pork, by the way, was something of a ceremonious occasion. The owner of the pig invited his shopmates to assist him in the task. A committee would inspect the pig, pronounce it fat enough to kill, and fix the date of the execution of the sentence. On that day, the shoemaker and his friends stayed away from the factory. The shoemaker provided a generous quantity of rum. He and his friends dressed the pig, salted the pork, and drank the rum.

Colonial shoemakers often took pay for their work in food and lodging or in corn, beaver skins, wampum or other commodities that were current in colonial times, when real money was scarce. Towards the close of the colonial period wages of shoemakers rose to be as high as 70 cents a day. Today shoemakers of superior skill sometimes earn 70 cents an hour during busy seasons.

After the Revolution trade began to expand, and shoe manufacturers increased their business and shoemakers their wages. But the supply of money was still lamenta-

bly scarce. Shoe manufacturers sold goods west and south on six and even nine months credit. Often, they accepted payment in merchandise. They had scant supplies of money with which to pay their shoemakers. In Lynn, shoemakers established a general store called a Union store, and paid their employees in orders on this store. The orders read "Please deliver to the bearer goods to the amount of —".

These orders were commonly exchanged for provisions. It was common for a shoemaker to push a barrow, or tug a little cart laden with shoes, to the shop each Saturday afternoon and return home with a load made up of goods secured at the Union store, such as a salt fish, a jug of molasses, a bag of corn meal, some tea, or coffee, sugar, butter or other food stuffs, and perhaps a piece of cloth for a garment, or some household furnishing. The Union store orders sometimes were circulated in place of cash, but were accepted at 70 or 80 per cent. discount. At times, shoemakers had to take them, for manufacturers refused employment to those who demanded cash in payment of wages. The wages of the time were from \$5 to \$7 a week, payable in orders.

Many happy homes in New England were maintained by the diligent use of the awl, waxed threads and flat faced hammer and by thrift in living.

There was romance, too, in former days of shoemaking in New England. School boys used to tarry about the shops of the shoemakers, and watch them work, and listen to their stories, sometimes as true as gospel and sometimes as visionary as a fairy tale. There is the story told by a

**" HANNAH AT THE WINDOW BINDING SHOES " (By Courtesy of Rice & Hutchins)**





venerable grandmother of today, who pleasantly recollects that in the days of her youth her parents consented to her marriage if she proved herself a thrifty housekeeper, the proof to be the earning and the making of two dresses, two pairs of sheets and two sets of pillow cases. She earned the money for the material for these articles by sewing shoes, and she made the articles herself. Then there is the sad and equally true story, told in poetry by Lucy Larcom, of "Hannah at the Window Binding Shoes," and watching in vain for her lost sailor lover to return. As surely as was Sailor Ben lost forever, so are lost "the good old days" of shoemaking in New England.

## **Ebenezer Breed, First Tariff Maker**

After the Revolution, the new nation began to prosper, and its shoemakers struggled to make a start in business. John Adam Dagyr, a Welchman, had settled in Lynn, had imported shoes, cut them up and studied them, and had improved on them, until the newspapers spoke of him as "The Celebrated Shoemaker of Essex," and advised American women to buy shoes of him, for they were superior to those imported from London or Paris. He was a genuine patriot, for he taught his associates freely of his skill, and when the Revolution came, he shouldered a musket, and served in the Continental army. The Sons of the Revolution have marked his grave in a West Lynn cemetery. But shoemakers have not publicly honored his memory, though his services to the shoe trade were of far greater worth than were his services in war.

While shoemakers of the young nation were struggling to make a start in business, old established shoe makers of England and France were sending shoes to this country in such quantities, and at such low prices, that it looked as if Yankee shoemakers would never be able to make a good beginning in business. But, at the critical moment, the first great leader in the American shoe manufacturing industry appeared. This man, Ebenezer Breed, proposed that Congress put a tariff on shoes of sufficient size, to keep out European shoes, until American shoemakers got a firm start in Business. He told Congressmen that the

shoemakers had protected the country during the perils of the Revolution, and now they deserved protection against their own foreign enemies. He gave a splendid dinner in Philadelphia, to which he invited noted leaders in American politics. He made a grandiloquent speech, urging the establishment of a tariff on shoes. He was supported by Hamilton, Madison and other leaders in American politics. He carried his point. Congress put a tariff on shoes. Foreign footwear was shut out. The American shoe manufacturing industry began to prosper and it has been prospering ever since. It owes a debt of gratitude to Breed for services in conceiving and in establishing a protective tariff on shoes.

Breed's career was tragic. He was born in Lynn, and was brought up a Quaker. He became a shoe merchant. He prospered. He became a conspicuous figure in Philadelphia. He went to England, where he was received by King George. West, the painter, gave him a platter with his own portrait on it. He visited Paris, too. But there, during one bloody day of the French Revolution, he lay hidden in a cellar. When he returned home, he made a tour of triumph among the chief cities of the country.

His downfall was quick and sad. He loved a Quaker miss. Her parents forbad his suit, because he learned to drink liquors, contrary to the Quaker faith, while he was travelling in Europe. Losing in love, he began to drink more heavily. He lost his business, and then his eye sight, and he was compelled to find shelter in the almshouse of his native town of Lynn. So fell the man once received by kings.

In poverty, and in blindness, his simple Quaker faith returned to him. Some friends taught him shoemaking. He made shoes, and sent them to Dolly Madison, and other persons, who were friends in his prosperity; and in his adversity, too, for they sent him gifts. He became very gentle. Children learned to love him, and to call him Uncle Eben and to lead him among shops and homes of his friends. One little girl, the daughter of the Quaker miss he had loved, often brought him baskets of dainties from her mother's kitchen.

For many years, Breed lived in peace, though in poverty, in the almshouse. And all the while, the shoe trade, before which he had thrown up a strong bulwark in the protective tariff, flourished mightily.

## Story of The Sewing Machine

One of the greatest American inventions was the sewing machine. It has done more to lighten the work of women than any other device, and it has been a wonderful means of increasing the supply of apparel from shoes to hats. It was one of the early causes of the revolution in shoe manufacturing methods.

More than a century of experimenting was necessary to bring the sewing machine in to common use. An Englishman secured patents on a sewing machine in 1755, and Thomas Lye, a Yankee, experimented with a sewing machine in 1826. Barthlemy Thinonniere, who was born in Lyons, France, a century ago, made a machine that would take 200 stitches a minute. A mob destroyed it, and threatened to destroy its inventor also.

Napoleon, who wanted clothing for his soldiers, offered rich reward for a sewing machine. But it remained for a Yankee mechanic, of years after Napoleon, to produce a sewing machine, and he did it to help his wife with the family sewing. Or, at least that desire inspired him with his great idea.

Elias Howe, inventor of the sewing machine, was born in Spencer, Mass., in 1810, was brought up on a farm, learned the machinery trade, and went to work in machine shops in Lowell, and later in Cambridge, Mass. While resting at his home in Cambridge, after his day's work was done, the thought came to him as he watched

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his wife sewing, that he could build some sort of a machine that would help his wife make the family clothing. He began to experiment, became inspired with his purpose, and labored upon his invention, so earnestly that he sacrificed his regular employment and his health, and reduced himself and his family to very slender means.

It is tradition that the solution of his most vexing problem came to him in a dream. He dreamed that he was seized by savages whose king commanded him to be beheaded if he did not make his sewing machine sew within thirty minutes. Guards advanced to seize him, and execute him. He noticed that there was an eye in the point of each guardsman's spear. The thought flashed across his mind that the eye of the needle of his machine should be in its point, not in its butt, as in an ordinary needle, and he awoke from his dream with a solution of his problem.

Howe secured his first patents in 1846. But fortune was not ready to crown with success his years of labor. He had no means with which to build sewing machines. To save himself and his family from want, he took a position as a locomotive engineer. He was tempted to go to England by an offer from a corset manufacturer of \$1250 and a position of \$15 a week for English rights to his patents. But this English offer was a disappointment, and he returned home arriving in New York practically penniless, to find that his wife was dying of consumption, and that machinery manufacturers were building sewing machines, on which he held patents.

He secured financial assistance, brought suit against

machinery companies for infringement on his patents, and soon his adversity was turned to prosperity for the courts confirmed his patent rights, and he lawfully demanded and collected royalties for the use of his invention. At one time, his royalty receipts amounted to \$4000 a day. He became a rich man. It is related that during the Civil war, in which he was a volunteer, his regiment being without pay, he disappeared from camp and returned with a treasure chest, from which he paid the entire regiment.

Among the contemporaries of Howe were Allen B. Wilson, who patented the moving feed bar in 1850, and Isaac H. Singer, who patented the presser foot in 1852. Singer founded the great Singer Sewing Machine Company.

In 1851, John Brooks Nichols, a Lynn shoemaker, saw in a Boston newspaper an advertisement of a lot of 25 Singer sewing machines for sale. Then, an advertisement of sewing machines was as novel as is an advertisement of flying machines today. Nichols, being anxious to take up something with a promising future before it, bought one of these machines. He established in Boston a shop in which he sewed trousers on contract for tailors.

Being a shoemaker by trade, Nichols naturally thought that the machines could be made to sew shoes, as well as trousers. So he began to experiment, morning and night, before and after his regular day's work, trying to make the machine sew shoes. He had special threads made, and he filed needles to many shapes, and he varied the



movements of the machine, until he at last got the right combination for sewing shoes of leather.

Nichols went to Howe for the purpose of securing rights to use his sewing machine for sewing leather shoes. Howe told him that William B. Bliss, a Worcester, Mass., shoe manufacturer, who had advanced him the money to fight his patent suits, had the right to use the machine for sewing leather. Mr. Nichols and Mr. Bliss joined interests, and established the firm of Nichols, Bliss & Co., Boston. In their store they set up a machine, and sewed shoes on it, and shoe men came from far and wide to look upon the wonder.

Mr. Nichols took a machine and went through shoe manufacturing towns, demonstrating it publicly. After one demonstration, a young woman who stitched shoes by hand, said to him: "I would like to see you hanged to a sour apple tree. Your machine will rob me of my daily bread."

Many other women had similar opinions of the machines. They could not foresee the great boon it would be to them. But some thrifty women, who stitched shoes at home by hand during spare time, bought machines and used them for doing the family sewing, and also for stitching shoes. Of course, they very much increased their product, and their wages. The first machines were crude. Some of them were turned by a hand wheel, like the wheel on an old fashioned coffee mill. Some men of shoe cities recall that when they were boys it was their task to turn the wheel of the sewing machine after school, while mother stitched shoes on it.

In the course of time, manufacturers had sewing machines set up in their factories, and connected them with steam, or other power. Then women came from their homes, where they had been sewing shoes for years, to run the machines in the factories. Earnings, which had been as low as \$2 and \$3 a week, when women sewed shoes at home, increased to \$5 and \$10 a week, and now they range from \$5 to \$20 a week. In the home, all the work of stitching a shoe upper was done by one woman, who patiently plied her needle all the way round the seams. In the modern factory, the labor of stitching a shoe upper is sub-divided to such an extent that 30 different operations, in which 30 different machines are used, are now commonly performed in stitching rooms.

In the home, the work of sewing shoes was often carried on under difficulties. The light was often poor, and the eye strain severe. In modern factories, the work of sewing shoes is carried on with every facility, and, in the best factories, with excellent light, and even with the services of an oculist to make sure that there is no strain. The young women who told Mr. Nichols that his machine "would rob her of her daily bread" was a poor prophetess.

## **The Revolutionary McKay Machine**

When the Civil War broke out, the government was perplexed to provide sufficient shoes for soldiers. So many shoemakers had volunteered that enough were not left in the factories to make shoes for those who had gone to war. Some shoemakers dropped unfinished shoes on their benches, as Putnam left his plow in the furrow. In Marblehead, manufacturers, rode around town, waving rolls of bills, and offering double and triple wages to shoemakers who would finish their work before they went to the front. Prices of shoes doubled.

Congress contemplated the removal of the tariff on shoes, so that army shoes, as well as footwear for the people, could be imported from England. A crisis was at hand in American shoemaking. But, as always has happened in this great nation, the right man with the right idea appeared in the time of greatest need. Colonel Gordon McKay brought out a sole sewing machine, so wonderful that it not only took the places of the shoemakers who had gone to war, but it provided the people with more shoes, better shoes and cheaper shoes than they ever had before.

This machine was invented by Lyman R. Blake, a Yankee genius, born in South Abington, August 24, 1835. He worked in a shoe factory during school vacations. Before he was 21, he had saved \$1400, and had bought an interest in a shoe manufacturing firm. To improve

**LYMAN BLAKE**  
Inventor of the McKay Machine



the business, he thought of making a machine to sew soles to uppers.

His partners told him that he could go ahead with his idea providing that he spent none of the company's time or money in his work. So he began to work nights, building a sole sewing machine. With a knife, he whittled a model of a machine. He got the town wheelwright to make him moulds, and he had cast metal parts of a machine. He put the parts together and found that the machine would sew shoes. The work was simple, but the achievement was great, for the machine was destined to overthrow shoe manufacturing methods that had prevailed since the time of Thomas Beard, the first shoemaker, and for centuries before. Blake secured his patents in 1858.

Blake realized that he had a machine that was too big for his limited capital and business experience. He accepted the offer of Col. Gordon McKay, of \$70,000 for his patent rights, \$8000 to be paid in cash, and \$62,000 from the profits of the company. A syndicate of Lynn shoe manufacturers made a vain effort to buy the machine.

Blake went to Staunton, Va., where he established a retail shoe store. The war opened and he came north on the last train, and left his new store to the Confederates. His return was timely for the shoe manufacturing industry and for Union soldiers in need of footwear. Colonel McKay was spending money lavishly on it. He once declared the invention of so great importance that it was impossible to spend too much money on it. But

the best mechanical experts that McKay employed failed to make the machine run satisfactorily. Blake quickly mastered the machine. He made it sew shoes. He went among New England shoe factories, setting up machines, and teaching shoemakers to run them.

By 1862, McKay machines were in use in several New England factories. Thousands of pairs of shoes were sewed on them, and were sent to soldiers. Shoemakers at the front, who had deserted their benches before the McKay machine appeared, used to study the shoes, and wonder how in the world any sort of a machine could be made to sew shoes.

During a visit to Washington, Hon. Peter Neal, mayor of Lynn, and an excellent Quaker gentleman, told Lincoln, his personal friend, of the McKay machine that would sew around the sole of a shoe in 30 seconds. The president asked several questions, and then said, "Friend Neal, go home and buy real estate. The day of the little country shops is coming to an end. Shoes will be made in big factories in cities." Mr. Neal came home, told the story. He made no money himself by following Lincoln's advice; but some of his friends did.

The McKay machine revolutionized the shoe manufacturing industry. It drew shoemakers from the little shops, in which shoes had been made by hand for generations, into the machine equipped, power driven factories of the centres. It multiplied product, decreased hours of labor, increased wages, and provided the people with better shoes for less money.

When Lyman Blake, inventor of the McKay machine,

**COL. GORDON R. McKAY**  
**Developer of McKay Machine and of royalty system.**





applied, in 1876 for an extension of his patents, he testified that from July, 1861, to July, 1876, 177,665,135 pairs of shoes had been sewed on the McKay machines, at an average saving of 18 cents a pair and at a total saving of \$13,979,724.30.

Shoe manufacturers also testified that the McKay machine had enabled them to develop better manufacturing methods and to improve their product. Shoemakers testified that the machine had enabled them to decrease their hours of labor and to increase their wages, and that it also had benefitted very much their health.

When shoemakers worked by hand, they bent over their lasts much of the time, cramping their lungs. Consumption, as tuberculosis, was then called, was a common disease among shoemakers. Physicians sought means of preventing it. But the chief prevention of it came, not from the science of medicine, but from the art of invention. The McKay machine, which Blake invented, enabled shoemakers to stand up while at work, and to breathe normally, and as a consequence cases of tuberculosis among them greatly diminished.

Blake, who was a mechanic genius, experimented with various inventions. He conceived the idea that people could travel quickly, cheaply and easily if they had wheels on their shoes, as a carriage had wheels on its body. But some other genius originated roller skates, and Blake yielded precedence to him in patent claims. Blake travelled much in this country and in Europe, visiting shoe factories for the purpose of introducing or improving his machine. He died in 1883, at the age of 48.

Colonel McKay had a long, and somewhat romantic career. He was the great American genius in the development of American shoe machinery. He established the royalty system, and he was a chief promotor of the United Shoe Machinery Company. He recognized the usefulness of machinery to industry and to the people, and he left \$5,000,000 to Harvard university, saying in his will, "Inasmuch as a large part of my life has been devoted to the study and invention of machinery, I instruct the president and fellows to take special care that the great subject of mechanical engineering in all its branches and in the most comprehensive sense, be thoroughly provided for from my endowment."

## **A Machine with Fingers Like a Laster**

For a score of years after it was proven practicable and profitable to sew soles by machinery it was necessary to last soles by hand. Inventors burned barrels of midnight oil, and promoters spent hundreds of thousands of dollars, in endeavors to change the lasting of shoes from hand to machine methods, as Blake and McKay had changed the sewing of shoes.

Manufacturers had sole sewing and other machines in their factories, but all their shoes were lasted by hand. The lasters were skillful workmen, and had a natural pride in their craft. They commanded wages of from \$20 to \$50 a week, and they were looked upon as gentlemen of the shoe trade.

It is a tradition that in a Lynn shoe factory a laster voiced the popular sentiment of lasters one day by saying, "No matter if the McKay machine is a wonderful machine, no man can build a machine that will last shoes unless he can make a machine with fingers on it like a laster." This boast fell upon the ears of J. W. Matzeli-ger, an operator of a McKay sewing machine. This young man was born in Dutch Guiana, son of a Dutch engineer, and he was trained as a machinist. He had in mind improvements on McKay machines, but the boast of the laster led him to try a machine "with fingers like a laster."

He went to work secretly in a little room over a mis-

sion in West Lynn. He worked by day, running a McKay machine, in the shoe factory of P. J. Harney & Co. He worked in his own little shop at night, building a model of his lasting machine. He spent all his earnings in his experiments. He was so poor that he picked up cigar boxes, and bits of wood, from the streets, to use in his model.

His first machine was a failure. But a friendly machinery man thought he saw one good idea in it, and offered him \$50 for it. Matzeliger concluded that if the model was worth \$50 to any other person, it was worth more to himself, and he kept it, and went to work to improve it.

Unhappily for Matzeliger, his secret leaked out. Fellow shoeworkers taunted him about the machine. But Matzeliger worked on, cheered by an offer of \$1500 for his second model. He built a third model, and this was so satisfactory that a company was formed to buy his patents. Matzeliger's triumph came too late to profit him. He died of consumption before a fourth and satisfactory model of his machine was completed.

The machine fulfilled Matzeliger's ambition. It proved a machine "with fingers like a laster". It was set up in factories, after stubborn, prolonged and costly strikes against it by the hand lasters. One veteran laster used to say that the machine revenged Matzeliger on the hand lasters who taunted him, by singing as it worked, "I've got your job, I've got your job."

Matzeliger left to the Methodist church in Lynn, which he attended, a block of stock in the company formed to

**J. W. MATZELIGER**  
**Inventor of the Lasting Machine.**



manufacture his invention. In time, the stock was sold for sufficient money to pay the church mortgage.

The Matzeliger machine, commonly called the Consolidated machine, or hand method machine, revolutionized the trade of lasting shoes. One hand laster can last 60 pairs of shoes completely in a day. The Consolidated machine, used in conjunction with auxiliary machines, will last from 200 to 700 pairs a day, the number according to the grade of the shoes.



## **Growth of the U. S. M. Co.**

The organization of the United Shoe Machinery Company was a natural economic development of the times. Railroads and large industrial corporations had been caused to cease cut throat competition, and to merge their interests and efforts, for the protection of investors and the improvement of their service to the public. The shoe machine trade was compelled to do likewise.

The United Shoe Machinery Company was formed, February 9, 1899, by the consolidation of the McKay Sewing Machine Company, Consolidated and McKay Lasting Machine Company, Goodyear Shoe Machinery Company, International Goodyear Shoe Machinery Company, Goodyear Shoe Machinery Company of Canada, Eppler Welt Machinery Company and the Davey Pegging Machine Company.

The capital was \$25,000,000, and the officers were:—

Sidney W. Winslow, president; John H. Hanan, Wallace F. Robinson, and Orlando E. Lewis, vice presidents; George W. Brown, treasurer and general manager; William Barbour, Louis D. Brandeis, George W. Brown, J. H. Clark, Charles H. Cole, William H. Coolidge, W. S. Easton, John H. Hanan, Elmer P. Howe, Edward P. Hurd, George E. Keith, Frederick G. King, O. E. Lewis, Edwin H. Mathewson, Rudolph Matz, Gordon McKay, Wallace F. Robinson, James J. Storrow, Alfred R. Turner, Samuel Neil, and Sidney W. Winslow, directors.

**SIDNEY W. WINSLOW**



"The objects arrived at by this concentration," said a trade paper of the time, "are increases in business economies of administration and cessation of patent litigation between companies, which have been expensive to them and annoying to shoe manufacturers. These results can be attained without increase in cost to users of machinery and with better machines." This was a very simple announcement considering what the company has done.

Even optimistic stock brokers, who were booming the stock of the Company ventured to predict only \$2,500,000 as the future annual earnings of the company.

The progress of the United Shoe Machinery Company amazed its promoters, the shoe trade and the public. It absorbed small shoe machinery companies until it controlled 98 per cent. of the shoe machinery business of the country, not including the stitching room machinery business, which is in the hands of the Singer and other sewing machinery companies.

During the period from 1900 to 1910 it increased its capital from \$18,292,218 to \$34,125,638, its earnings from \$1,700,110 to \$5,640,000 and its surplus to \$18,542,220. Its stock proved a gold mine to early investors in it.

During the same period, American shoe manufacturers increased the value of their product from \$320,107,000 to \$442,631,000, an increase of 38 per cent. They increased wages from \$69,059,000 to \$92,359,000 an increase of 34 per cent.

While this great expansion in business was going on, the royalty charge for machinery used in making shoes

was held down to an average of 2 3-8 cents per pair. It was the one item in costs of shoe manufacturing that did not show an increase during the decade. All the while, steady improvement was being made in the quality of shoes supplied to the people.

Sales of shoes abroad increased to approximately \$16,-000,000 annually. United Shoe Machinery Company machinery and shoe experts were sent round the world, and American shoe manufacturing methods were adopted in factories farthest North in Norway, in tropical Central America, many cities of South America, in England and all the countries of Europe, in Africa, Australia, and even in China and Japan and the Philippines.

The United Shoe Machinery Company constructed a model manufacturing plant in Beverly, of re-inforced concrete, in which it employs 5000 persons, at a very high average wage, and under most pleasant conditions. Connected with the Beverly plant are a country club house for employees, with 1000 members, a gun club, motor boat club, poultry club, a brass band and athletic teams of many kinds. Land is loaned to employees who wish to cultivate vegetables. An emergency hospital is maintained. Reading and rest rooms are provided for women. Sanitation and ventilation exceeds the state requirements. Study of prevention of accidents has led to a reduction of 73 per cent. in the number of accidents.

Employees have a sick and death benefit society. Women employees leave the factory ten minutes before the men, and report for work ten minutes after the men, thereby gaining privacy from men employees, and also,

seats in electric cars. In a large dining room substantial meals are served at cost. Conditions at the Beverly factory have been commended by the welfare department of the National Civic association.

It is very much to be doubted if this extensive development of the shoe machinery business, its splendid improvements in means of production, its large gains in sales of machinery at home and abroad, and its distribution of profits and wages, could have been accomplished by any other means than the formation of this big shoe machinery company with its large accumulation and concentration of capital, brains and experience in its particular branch of industry.

The organization and development of the United Shoe Machinery Company was brought about largely by Sidney W. Winslow and George W. Brown. Mr. Winslow was the son of a shoe manufacturer of Salem and Lynn, and was foreman in his father's factory. As he approached the prime of life, the thought came to him that he should do something for himself and his family. A like thought comes to every man. Careless men ignore it; thrifty men secure additional life insurance. Mr. Winslow, being an exceptional man, began to do exceptional things. He developed the Naumkeag Buffing Machine Company, brought old established gas companies up to modern standards, joined George W. Brown and others in developing the Consolidated Lasting Machine Company, and marketing the invention of Matzelliger. Next he, and Mr. Brown, and Colonel McKay and others developed the United Shoe Machinery Company, and Mr.

Winslow was chosen first president of the company and continues to serve in that capacity. He is a man of remarkable mental power, being quick and keen in analyzing a situation and commanding it. He had become one of the foremost bankers of Boston, as well as the chief figure in the shoe machinery industry. Though a commander in business, he is a most modest and retiring man personally.

Mr. Brown, Mr. Winslow's friend and associate in business, was born in Northfield, Vermont, August 30, 1841, worked in a general store, went west as a railroad clerk, became salesman for the Wheeler & Wilson Sewing Machine Company, and rose to the position of manager of the Boston office. He joined with Mr. Winslow in promoting the Hand Method Lasting Machine Company, and in forming the United Shoe Machinery Company, of which he became treasurer and general manager. He held this position until 1910, when he sought more leisure, and turned over his offices to successors, that of treasurer to L. A. Coolidge, and that of general manager to E. P. Brown, his son. Mr. Brown's career was that of a typical New Englander. He worked most diligently and industriously, and always cheerfully. He finds much pleasure in travel and in companionship of friends.

GEORGE W. BROWN



1862  
1863

## The Royalty System

Colonel McKay introduced the lease and royalty system into the shoe machinery industry, possibly getting it from the patent medicine industry. The United Shoe Machinery Company continued it in force, since it was a common system, and it prevails in 98 per cent. of the shoe factories of the country today. It is now being investigated by the government, and fought by the Shoe Manufacturers' Alliance.

Colonel McKay figured, when planning to market the McKay machine, that he might build 4000 machines, at a cost of \$30 a machine, and sell them at \$350 apiece, and thereby clean up a profit of \$1,280,000. But he also foresaw that this profit, though large, would stop when all factories were equipped with machines, and that the presence of old machines in factories would be a serious obstacle to the sale of improved machines.

So he determined to lease machines to shoe manufacturers, and to charge them so much per pair for each pair of shoes sewed on the machine. The charge ranged from one to five cents a pair, according to the size and quality of the shoes. Counters were put on machines to count the number of pairs sewed.

Colonel McKay set aside a block of stock of the McKay Sewing Machine Company as a "Shoemaker's Gift Enterprise". He agreed to give one share of stock, worth \$5 per share par, with each \$100 worth of stamps. One

•Lynn manufacturer gave his gift stock to his daughter, and she gained an income of \$1200 a year from them. An unlucky manufacturer pasted his certificates on his office wall to decorate it. Painters brushed a coat of paint over them, and ruined them, and a small fortune was destroyed.

Colonel McKay's plan worked as he had anticipated. Shoe manufacturers, realizing the advantage of the use of machines for making shoes, and tempted by gifts of shares of stock, leased many machines. The income of the McKay Company from the sale of royalty stamps rose to \$750,000 annually. Dividends paid by the company from 1865 to 1875 totalled to \$1,802,138.16. This was a much larger sum than Colonel McKay figured would be gained by selling the machine outright. The royalty income ceased when shoe manufacturers, taking advantage of the expiration of the fundamental patents on the McKay machine, refused to buy any more royalty stamps.

When the United Shoe Machinery Company was formed, it applied to its business this royalty system, which Colonel McKay had introduced, and which others had copied, in the shoe machinery industry. It offered to provide manufacturers with "anything from a tack to a complete factory equipment" and to lease any of its essential machines for a small royalty payment, and to supply auxiliary machines at nominal charges. It declined to sell outright any of its chief machines.

It furthermore agreed to keep its machines in first class repair. To accomplish this purpose it established in the chief shoe centres of the country branch offices, which

serve as headquarters for skilled road men, and as depots for supplies and machine parts.

The lease system, as developed by the United Shoe Machinery Company has been likened to a railroad system. The United Shoe Machinery Company provides a complete system of machinery, on which to make shoes, just as a railroad company provides a complete train of cars on which to ride. The United Shoe Machinery Company does not sell its machines outright, nor does the railroad company its cars. The United Shoe Machinery Company charges a fee for the use of its machines, as the railroad company charges a fare for the use of its cars.

Leases of the United Shoe Machinery Company are in force in about 98 per cent. of the shoe factories of the country. Some of them require the lessee to use in conjunction with certain leased machines of the United Shoe Machinery Company auxiliary machines and supplies and parts provided by the United Shoe Machinery Company. The clauses fixing these requirements, are called "tying clauses." The leases are for a period of 19 years.

The lease system in general, and the "tying clauses" in particular, have lately been attacked by some shoe manufacturers. R. H. Long, of South Framingham, shoe manufacturer, got through the General Court of Massachusetts, in 1909, a law permitting shoe manufacturers to use in conjunction with United Shoe Machinery Company machines any auxiliary machines they wished. He established a shoe machinery shop, and built machinery for use in his own shoe factory.

In 1911, western shoe manufacturers, who failed to

purchase the Wonder Working system of Thomas G. Plant, formed the Shoe Manufacturers' Alliance. They induced to join with them a number of eastern shoe manufacturers, notably Charles H. Jones, president of the Commonwealth Shoe & Leather Company. The Alliance manufacturers demanded of the United Shoe Machinery Company that it lower its royalty charges and permit lessees to use such auxiliary machines and supplies as they wished. As their demands were refused they established the Non Royalty Shoe Company, which concern has recently equipped in St. Louis a shoe factory with non royalty machinery purchased from a score of independent shoe machinery firms in this country and in Europe.

The Alliance manufacturers hope to demonstrate, in this Non Royalty factory, that it is more economical for shoe manufacturers to buy machinery outright, and to buy supplies and parts, and secure repairs, according to their individual desires, than it is to lease machines, buy supplies and parts and have repairs made by United Shoe Machinery Company agents, as leases require.

The United Shoe Machinery Company has steadfastly replied to its critics that, if it should sell shoe machinery outright, and require shoe manufacturers to pay cash for their machines, that it would be impossible for ambitious men with limited capital to start shoe manufacturing, since their outlay for machinery would consume their capital. It further declares that if shoe manufacturers were required to buy machinery outright, and to pay for it in cash, that the small manufacturers of the present day would be unable to buy new machines as they ap-

THE MODEL MANUFACTURING PLANT OF THE U. S. M. CO. AT BEVERLY



peared and thereby would be forced out of business by progressive and more wealthy rivals. The eventual outcome of the handicapping of the small shoe manufacturer, by making him buy his machinery, the United Shoe Machinery Company predicted, would be to force him from business, and make clear the field for the formation of a shoe trust.

While the United Shoe Machinery Company declared itself fighting against the formation of a shoe manufacturing trust, the United States government prosecuted it for maintaining a shoe machinery trust. The government also questioned the legality of the "tying clauses". The United Shoe Machinery Company has made a general denial of the charge that it is a trust, and it has made the specific declaration that the recent decision of the United States Supreme court in the mimeograph case makes it lawful for owners of patented machines to require that lessees of such machines use in conjunction with them only such auxiliary machines, supplies and parts, as the owners may provide.

Decisions on the legality of the United Shoe Machinery Company methods are yet to be made by the United States courts, and results of tests of the respective merits of the royalty and non royalty systems are yet to be reported by the Shoe Manufacturers Alliance. Sentiment in the shoe trade is divided as to the legality and economy of the United Shoe Machinery Company and its leases, just as the sentiment of the public is divided on all trust matters. Congress has taken up for consideration the matter of revising patent laws, and bills now before it, if passed,



may forbid owners of patents to require that only certain auxiliary machines, supplies and parts be used with their machines.

The lease and royalty system has netted large earnings to the United Shoe Machinery Company as it did to Colonel McKay. The United Shoe Machinery Company claims, like Colonel McKay that the system benefits much shoe manufacturer, shoe workers and the public, eliminating wastes of money time and labor that were common under old conditions, and enabled manufacturers to increase their output, to pay larger wages to shoeworkers and to provide the people with better shoes.

## **The Factory System**

The factory system was known in the textile industry of old England, and it may have been introduced into England by the Romans. But the development of the factory system in shoe manufacturing is comparatively modern, and only in recent years has the factory system become a great political and social, as well as industrial problem.

The factory system in the shoe industry was established by the introduction of power driven machinery into the industry. It is a common story that McKay's machine revolutionized shoe making from a hand to a machine industry. But the change had been going on slowly for a half century before McKay's machines appeared.

Some genius of the early New England shoe industry discovered that time could be saved, and product improved, by division of the labor of making shoes. So one man cut uppers of shoes, another cut soles, and a third sewed on soles, and finished the shoes. The uppers were commonly stitched by women at home. The factory system, with its sub-divisions of labor, made for the purpose of increasing efficiency of employees, would undoubtedly have been developed, even if machinery had not been introduced. Pictures of shoemakers at work in Holliston, Mass., factory of 1840 show how labor was sub-divided in shoe factories in days before machinery was used.

A shoemaker's kit of 1840, when all shoes were made

by hand, was made up of the following tools, according to Johnson's "Sketches of Lynn":

"A lap stone, hammer, stirrup, whet board, pincers, nippers, shoulder stick, long stick, pettibois, toe stick, fender, bead, scraper, knives of different sorts, such as skiver, paring off knife, heel knife, etc., awl, bristles, tacks, beeswax, a piece of sponge, paste horn, bottle of blacking, gum, and acid, chalk, dog fish skin, stitch rag, grease, channel-opener and apron."

The shoemaker of today would be as much at loss to handle these old fashioned tools as an old fashioned shoemaker would be at loss to handle the machines of today. Many of the old fashioned tools were imported. Some were home made, and others had unusual sources of origin. The lap stone might have come from the nearby farm, or from Africa's shore, and any of the sticks might have been from an Indian's tomahawk, or a South Sea islander's war club. The shark skin, which was obtained from fishermen, was the predecessor of sand paper.

The development of the machinery system was slow. It began, according to tradition, with the rolling machine. Samuel Preston, a Danvers, Mass., shoe manufacturer, invented and used a pegging machine in 1833, and a pair of shoes that he pegged on it are in the Essex Institute. This machine was followed by the McKay machine, the Goodyear machines, invented in 1862 by August Destroy, and the Matzeliger machines. These machines, the most important used in shoe factories, were steadily improved by their owners and they were merged into one system by the United Shoe Machinery Company

in 1898. Many other machines of much value have also come into use in the shoe trade, but most of them are auxiliary to these important machines. More than 4000 United States patents have been granted on shoe machinery.

First machines were driven by hand, or foot power, and did not largely multiply product. In 1855, William F. Trowbridge, of Feltonville, Mass., now Trowbridge, substituted a steam engine in place of Old General, his horse, who had patiently turned the main wheel of the factory for several years, having succeeded three stout Irishmen in the same monotonous but very necessary task. This was the beginning, according to tradition of the use of steam power for driving shoe machinery. Later, electric motors came into use.

The Goodyear machines did even more than the McKay machine to multiply product, increase wages and provide the people with better footwear. Before welt machines were used, all welt shoes, which were the better grade shoes, were made by hand. Well-to-do persons went to custom shoemakers for them. It cost, in the hand process of making these shoes by hand, from 20 to 25 cents a pair for sewing the welt to the upper, and from 40 to 50 cents a pair for sewing the sole to the welt. The total cost of welt sewing the soles to a pair of shoes was from 60 to 75 cents.

The original welt machines reduced the cost of sewing both welt and soles to a pair of shoes to ten cents, of which four cents was paid for the use of the machines, and six cents for labor. The total saving secured by the use of machines was from 50 to 65 cents.

The welt machines improved and multiplied the production of welt shoes, as well as cheapened it, and the custom shoe makers, who made shoes by hand, had to retire from business. Today, a person goes to a retail store, on most any street corner of a large city, and gets a pair of machine made welt shoes for \$4 or \$5 that look better and fit better than did the hand made welt shoes provided a generation ago by the custom shoemakers at \$10 or \$15 a pair.

When machines were harnessed to steam power, shoemakers had to come to factories to run them. They couldn't make by hand any where near as many pair of shoes in a day as did the machines. And it was impossible for them to move machines to their little shops at home, as Cobbler Keezar moved his bench to the brook side. A shoemaker who had a little shop on his farm, found that his wages dropped from \$22 to \$7 for making a 60 pair case of shoes, a week's work, after the factory system was established. He, and thousands like him, abandoned their little shops, and went into the factories.

A typical shop of a century ago was the Tapley shop, in Lynn. In it shoemakers toiled upon their individual responsibility. Each shoemaker made a pair of shoes completely. This shop is preserved with a complete equipment of shoemakers tools and implements, in the garden of the Essex Institute, in Salem. It is an object lesson of early methods of shoemaking.

A typical shop of 1850, or just before the McKay machine revolutionized hand shoemakers, was that of Christopher Robinson & Co., of Lynn. It was a brick factory,

**A MODERN SHOEMAKER.**

**Operating the Welt Sewing Machine at a speed of 500 stitches a minute.**



57x28 feet; two stories. Its cellar was used for storing sole leather, its first floor for cutting upper leather, and for offices, and its second floor for receiving manufactured shoes from employees and shipping them to customers. This firm employed nine men to cut leather in its factory, and it sent out parts of shoes to 375 men and women to be made up into boots and shoes at home. It produced 115,000 pairs of shoes, worth \$115,000 each year.

A typical factory of today is that of George E. Keith Co., of Brockton. This firm started in 1874, with a capital of \$1000, ten employees and an annual product of \$20,000. In 1910, it had nine factories employing 5000 persons and a capacity of 20,000 pairs of shoes daily. Its sales amounted to \$12,000,000 annually. This firm makes in a week more shoes than Christopher Robinson & Co. made in a year. And Christopher Robinson was considered a big manufacturer in his time. The Keith Co. is bigger today than it was in 1910. There are other firms who claim to be bigger, and some claim a capacity of more than 50,000 pairs of shoes a day.

If the big firms keep growing, a few of them will soon be able to make shoes for the entire nation. But the day of the small manufacturer is not yet at an end. A while ago, an enterprising young man remodelled a hen coop into a shoe shop, equipped it with machinery, driven by a motor, and he has a comfortable shoe business today. Other enterprising men have started in the shoe business on a small scale and have succeeded.

The development of the factory system has brought up some very complex problems of the industrial, political



and social relations between employers and employees. In colonial days, each shoemaker was his own master. In little shops of a century ago, each employer worked beside his employees, and knew them all by their first name, and was on very friendly terms with them. When the big shops came, the manufacturer was forced into his office, to watch his business, and the management of his factory passed into the hands of superintendent and foremen. Now, each important department in a shoe factory is in charge of a foreman. Some large firms with several factories and much sub-division of labor employ more than 100 superintendents and foremen. Their salaries range from \$1,000 to \$10,000 a year. Some firms find superintendent and foremen such valuable men that they make them members of the firm. The superintendent and foremen are responsible for maintaining the factory system, and, also, for the great task of maintaining pleasant relations between employer and employees.

Specialization has been carried out on an extensive scale. Formerly one man made a whole shoe. Now, 60 men, operating 60 different machines make a shoe. Each man works as skillfully and as swiftly as he can. By working day after day, and year after year, on the same part of the process of shoemaking, American shoemakers acquire wonderful speed and skill. Manufacturers specialize, too, making in one factory \$4 welt shoes only, or in another factory \$3 McKay shoes only, or in still another, shoes on one last only. Brockton makes men's shoes, in popular grades, exclusively, Lynn makes women's shoes chiefly, and Haverhill is famous for its slippers.

It is by this specialization that American manufacturers have beaten the world in shoemaking.

The manufacturers themselves are finding it advantageous to co-operate in business, and to organize into trade associations, like the National Association of Boot and Shoe Manufacturers, the New England Shoe and Leather Association and local manufacturers associations. The large associations are most valuable for dealing with huge problems, like the tariff, and national trade regulations. The smaller organizations deal with credits, factory conditions and labor matters. The Boot and Shoe club, an unique organization, dines monthly and listens to addresses by men of high repute who discuss topics of close interest to the shoe and leather trade. It is a most useful organization because it promotes pleasant social relations among shoe men as well as helps to spread knowledge of important subjects relating to the trade.

(Shoeworkers have organized strong labor unions, and have raised up new issues, which are among the most important issues before shoe manufacturers and the public today. The Boot and Shoe Workers union, John F. Tobin, president, makes contracts with shoe manufacturers, agreeing to provide shoemakers of skill as the employer may desire, and maintaining the right to fix the hours of labor, conditions of employment and wages of these men. The United Shoe Workers of America, a new organization, M. J. Tracey, president, does likewise. Some independent unions regulate conditions in their particular branches of shoemaking. Efforts to merge the

several labor organizations into one body have not yet been carried to success.

The labor organizations are raising up new issues and are forcing new conditions in the shoe industry. They demand consideration of the human element in manufacturing. They most patiently toil to support their demands. They work in two fields, the industrial and the political. They insist that manufacturers improve conditions in factories as fast as circumstances warrant, and they have shown their power to fix wages, hours of labor and conditions of employment. They have also proven their power to secure legislation regulating hours of labor of women and children, providing for inspection of factories, prevention of accidents, and compensation of injured workmen, and securing various other conditions desired by laboring men.

The labor movement goes for its foundation to Christianity and civilization, and like all large movements among men, it will probably not rise much above nor fall below the popular standards of Christianity and civilization.

The newest, and perhaps the greatest, of the forces that are active in the organization of the shoe manufacturing industry is scientific management. Like machinery and the factory system, it saves time and labor, increases wages and improves factory product. But greater than machinery, or the factory system, it considers the human element, and it undertakes to improve men and make them more proficient. It also tries to bring into harmony machinery, factory system and material, with the workers.

**THE CLUB HOUSE OF THE U. S. M. COUNTRY CLUB**



It seeks, not to make shoes cheaply by employing men cheaply, as was the methods of former times, but to constantly improve the employment of men, machinery and methods and product, so that the producer may get more for his labor and the consumer more for his expenditure of money.

It is a new science of industry, that is setting up higher standards than have hitherto prevailed. Like most innovations in industry, it is opposed or ignored by many, but the few that are taking advantage of it are profiting. It may bring forth greater things than those which Keezar saw in his wonderful lap stone.

The boot and shoe manufacturing industry, which was started on so simple a scale by Beard and other colonial shoeworkers, has become one of the chief industries of the nation. It now employs, according to the United States census for 1909, 185,116 shoe workers, who were paid \$92,359,000 in wages. There were engaged in it 1343 firms, with a capital of \$197,000,000. They produced 247,643,197 pairs of shoes, worth \$442,631,000.

By reason of the enterprise of American shoemakers, the American people are the best shod in the world, having not only more shoes, of better style and fitting qualities than people of any foreign country but cheaper shoes. While American shoemakers are first in achievement, yet their work is by no means done, for there is before them a future even greater than their past.

## The Indenture of Joseph Verry, Apprentice

*This indenture witnesseth that I, Daniel Verry of Danvers, in the County of Essex, Yeoman, Do put my son Joseph Verry, an apprentice to Daniel Putnam of said Danvers, Yeoman, to learn of his art or mystery of making shoes, and with him to serve after the manner of an apprentice from the day of the date hereof, for the term of five years and three months next ensuing: — During all which time the said apprentice is to serve the said Daniel faithfully, and obey all his lawful commands, he shall do no damage to his said master nor see any by others without giving him notice thereof. He shall not waste any of the said Putnams goods, nor lend them unlawfully to any person; he shall not play at cards, dice or any other unlawful game, whereby the said Putnam may be damaged; he shall not absent himself unreasonable time from his said masters service, neither by day or night; nor stay long at Ale-houses or Taverns; but in all things behave himself as a faithful and honest apprentice in the trade or mystery he now followeth.*

*And I, the said Daniel Putnam, do on my part Covenant to and with the said Daniel Verry, that I will procure and provide for the said apprentice, sufficient meat and drink, apparil, lodging, washing and mending, and other necessary things that he may want during said term. And when he, the said Joseph, has completed his apprenticeship, I, the said Daniel, do hereby agree to furnish him with a suit of Clothes that shall be worth thirty dollars, or give him that sum of money, whichever he may choose. And it is further mutually agreed that the said Joseph is to work half the said term at farming work.*

*And I, the said Daniel, do agree that the said Joseph shall have two months to go to school each of the next two winters; and if that should not prove sufficient to give him good learning, he is to have one month schooling the third winter; and I agree to pay him fifty dollars more besides the \$30.00 above mentioned, after he has completed his apprenticeship.*

*And for the true and faithfull performance of the said Covenant and agreement, we the said parties bind ourselves each to the other firmly by these presents. In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and seals this sixteenth day of March, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and four.*

*DANIEL VERRY. (Seal)*

*And I, the said Joseph Verry above named, do hereby consent to the condition of foregoing indenture, and have hereunto subscribed my name.*

*JOSEPH VERRY. (Seal.)*

*Signed, sealed and delivered in presence of us.*

*N. B. the interlining of the fifty dollars after he had completed his apprenticeship, was interlined before signing.*











**Date Due**

**AP 16 '69**

OC 16 '73

MY 21 '7A

DE 1478

MAY 5 1980  
~~miniter 1985~~

~~minutes 1985~~

JY 13 83



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